

*The Great Evil of SIN, as it is committed
against GOD.*

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S E R M O N

Preached in *Gosben*, at a Meeting of the
Consociation of Litchfield-County, in the
said Town, May 30th. 1753.

By JOSEPH BELLAMY, A.M.

Pastor of the Church in *Bethlem*.

Numb. xiv. 9. *Rebel ye not against the LORD.*

Jer. xlv. 4. *Oh, do not this abominable Thing which I hate.*

Mal. i. 14. *I am a great KING, saith the LORD of Hosts, and my
Name is DREADFUL among the Heathen.*

B O S T O N : N. E.

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Great Evil of Sin, as it is committed
against GOD.

S. E. R. A. W.

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By J. O. W. A. M.



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The Great *Evil* of *SIN*,
as committed against G O D.

P S A L. LI. 4.

Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned.



Sense of the great Evil of Sin, is essential to true Repentance. It may be laid down as a general *Maxim*, that “ we cannot be suitably affected towards Things, unless we see them as they are.” Be they, on the one Hand, ever so amiable and lovely, yet if their Beauty is not seen, our Hearts will be untouch’d. Even the infinite Glory and Excellence of GOD will not excite our Esteem and Love, if we have no Sense of it : And let the moral Beauty of the divine Government be ever so great, altho’ it may ravish the heavenly World, who see it, yet we, while blind to it, shall be wholly unmoved : And be the Gospel-way of Salvation, by free Grace thro’ *Jesus Christ*, ever so glorious, yet if the Glories of it are not discern’d, we may be far from admiring that divine Constitution.— So, on the other Hand, let *Sin* be ever so great an Evil, yet if the great Evil of it is not seen, we shall never be suitably affected towards it. Tho’ it deserves to be hated ever so much, and tho’ there be ever so great Reason that we should be humbled and abased before God on the Account of it, and mourn in the Bitterness of our Hearts for it, and be afraid of, and watch against it, as the greatest of Evils ;
yet

yet we shall not, unless it be seen as it is. Did we see it perfectly as it is, we should feel towards it perfectly as we ought : But unless we see it in some Measure as it is, we shall feel towards it in no Measure as we ought.—So that a Sense of the great Evil of Sin is plainly essential to true Repentance.—And, indeed, it is that, from which Repentance does nextly and most immediately take its Rise. Love to God, Faith in Christ, and Hope in the Mercy of God thro' Him, prepare and dispose the Heart to mourn for Sin : But it's a Sense of the great Evil of Sin, which immediately affects the Heart with Sorrow, and humbles and abases the Soul before the Lord. — *My Sin is ever before me—Against Thee have I sinned—Thou art just, when thou speakest—Have Mercy upon me, O God.* So also St. Paul,—*The Law is spiritual—I am carnal, sold under Sin—Oh, wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me ! **

Now,

The Evil of Sin arises from our Obligations to do otherwise. And the more strongly we are obliged to do our Duty, the more wicked is it in us to neglect it, or go contrary to it,—and the more are we to blame,—and the greater Cause have we to be sorry and penitent.

We may be under various Kinds of Obligations to the Practice of Virtue. The Honour and Authority of God may oblige us—The Welfare of our Fellow-Creatures may oblige us—and our own present and future Happiness may oblige us too : and therefore we may be to blame, and have Cause of Repentance, on several Accounts ; and that, for the Evil contained in one particular Action, viewed in various Respects, as it is—against God—our Fellow-Men—or our own Interest, for this World and the next.—And as is our Sense of these Things, so shall we be affected ; i. e. we shall be sorry and blame our selves accordingly.

For let our Obligations be ever so great ; yet, if they are not seen, we shall not feel our selves obliged, or look upon our selves to blame, when we do wrong. And if ever we

to blame our selves at all, it will be only as we have gone contrary to such Obligations as we are *sensible* of. Altho' we may be to blame, in other Respects; yet we shall not blame our selves. If we be to blame, for instance, for going contrary to the Honour and Authority of God; yet we shall not be disposed to blame our selves on that Account, unless we are sensible, how that the Honour and Authority of God did oblige us. If we are sorry for what we have done, at any Time, it will be only on such Accounts, on which, we see, we have done Wrong; and for such Reasons, for which, we see, we ought to have done otherwise.—Thus, if we see our great Obligations to all Holiness and Righteousness, arising from the Nature of God, and the Reasonableness of his Government, Sin will, accordingly, appear as an infinite Evil. But if we see our selves under no Obligations to God, but *merely* in Way of Gratitude for the Kindnesses we have received, we shall feel to blame for our Sins, *only* as they are Instances of Ingratitude. And in a Word, in what Respects soever, we see our selves obliged to do right, in those Respects we shall feel ourselves to blame when we do wrong; and that, in exact Proportion to the Weight, with which, a Sense of our Obligations lies on our Spirits.

Hence,

Persons of an *Epicurean* and Atheistical Temper, who see themselves under no Obligations to Virtue, but merely from present Self-Interest, as a virtuous Conduct tends to their present Ease, Profit & Honour; if they neglect their Duty, and do wrong, they will blame themselves, and be sorry, only because they have hurt themselves, and gone contrary to their own Interest for this World. — But if Persons have some belief of a future State, and of the Rewards and Punishments of another Life; they may be sorry for their sins, because by them they have forfeited Heaven, and exposed themselves to Hell.—Or if they are under the Influence of a compassionate Temper, or of natural Affection, and have injured a Neighbour, a Friend, or near Relative; Nature may prompt them, on that Account, to be sorry.—Or, if they

firmly

firmly believe, that God loves them, that Christ died for them, and that they are made Heirs of eternal Glory; and see, that by their Sins, they have been guilty of great Ingratitude towards their almighty Benefactor; they may, merely from natural Gratitude, be sorry on that Account.— But the great Evil of Sin, as it is AGAINST A GOD OF INFINITE GLORY, be not seen; they will not mourn for Sin on that Account. And yet if that which constitutes the great Evil of Sin, is not seen; and Sin is not hated and mourned for upon the Account of that, which is it's chief and principal Malignity, our Repentance is not genuine. It is of Importance therefore, that we know wherein the great Evil of Sin does really consist.—For which Purpose, let us attend to the Words of our Text, which contains the Confession of a true Penitent, and exhibits the Sentiments of a contrite Heart. *Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned.*

Where observe (1.) The particular Sins referred unto in these Words, viz. *Murder and Adultery*. For this *Psal* was composed after that *Nathan* the Prophet came to *David*, and reproved him, and denounced the Judgments of God against him for those Sins. And in this *Psal* he expressly refers to the Sin of *Murder*, which he had been guilty of. *Ps. 14. Deliver me from Blood-guiltiness, O God!* And 'tis supposed, he has Reference to his other Sin, in those Words *Ps. 10. Create in me a CLEAN Heart, O God!*—Now it is commonly and justly observed, that some Sins are immediately committed against GOD, such as, *Blasphemy, Idolatry &c.* while other Sins immediately respect our Neighbour, and are injurious to him, as was *David's Murder and Adultery*.—And yet, it seems, if we injure our Neighbour, God is sinned against, and we are to blame principally on that Account.

For observe (2.) The great Evil of *David's Sins*, as set forth in his Confession, and that which made them so exceedingly heinous, was, that they were committed against God.—*Against Thee, Thee only* (Thee chiefly and principally) *have I sinned*. He had injured *Uriah*, and done wrong on that Account; he had exposed himself to Reproach among his Subjects, and to Anguish in his own Heart, and was to blame for

bringing

ing so great a Calamity on himself.—But the Greatness
his Sin consisted in its being *against God*. And this seems
to swallow up all his Heart, and to overwhelm him with
sorrow. *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned.* And on this
account, his Sin appeared so great to him, that he was
ready to justify God, in the dreadful Sentence which God
pronounced against him, by *Nathan the Prophet*: That his
*Lives should be defiled in the Sight of the Sun, the Sword never
part from his House, and that his Child should die.* * *Thou
art just when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest.* †
God had sent *Nathan* to charge home his Sin and Guilt up-
on him, and to tell him, that by what he had done, he had
despised the Lord, and despised the Commandment of the Lord,
and given Occasion to the *Enemies of God to blaspheme* || —
He had *despised the LORD, and despised the Commandment of
the LORD*; for God had said, *Thou shalt not Kill, Thou shalt
not commit Adultery*; for *I am the LORD*. But *David* had
frankly said, “ I will commit Adultery with *Bathsheba*,
and gratify my Lust, for all that God says: and I will
murder her innocent Husband *Uriah*, that I may hide my
Sin and Shame by this wicked Means, notwithstanding
the divine Prohibition. I don’t care for God, nor his
Law, or Authority, so much, but that I will go thro’ with
my Designs, and that, let come what will; for I value my
Lust more than God, and my Reputation more than his
Honour; and therefore neither God, nor his Law, Au-
thority or Honour will I regard.” This was the Lan-
guage of *David’s* Conduct! And this is the Language of
every Sin!—And thus he despised the *Commandments* of God,
and despised *God himself*. And this was, with good Reason,
charged home upon him, as the great Evil of his Sin; and
for which God would severely punish him. And in a Sense
of this, with a broken Heart, he cries out, *Against thee,
thee only, have I sinned, and done this Evil in thy Sight: Where-
fore thou art just when thou speakest, and clear when thou
judgest.*—And thus we see wherein the great Evil of *David’s*
Sins did consist, both in the Sight of God, and to his own

B

Sense

Sense and Apprehension after he was become a sincere Penitent. And because every Sin is as really committed against God, as those were; and so, what was true, in this Case, will hold true, in all other Cases: Therefore from the Words we may make this *Doctrinal Observation*, viz.

D O C T R I N E.

The great EVIL of every SIN consists in this, that it is committed against G O D.

Of every Sin—not only of those which immediately respect God; as Blasphemy, Idolatry, Sabbath-breaking, and the like; but also of those which immediately respect and injure our selves, or Neighbours; as in this Case of *David*.

Their great Evil—their great Aggravation, that which above all Things renders us to blame, and deserving of Punishment for our Sins, is, that they are against God.—They may be against our own Interest and Honour in this World, and we may be to blame on that Account. They may be against our Welfare in the World to come; and we may be to blame on that Account. They may be against our Neighbour's Good, for Time, or for Eternity, or both; and we may be to blame in that Respect. But this is the great Evil of Sin, that it is against God.

Some assert, that our great Obligation to Virtue arises from its Tendency to our own particular Happiness: and that therefore the great Evil of Sin consists in its Tendency to our own particular Misery. — Others maintain, that our great Obligation to Virtue arises from its Tendency to promote the publick Good: and consequently the great Evil of Sin must consist in its Tendency to injure the Publick.—But the Scripture-Scheme is different from both: for according to that, it seems, our great Obligations to Virtue must arise from GOD; because, 'tis plain, in Scripture-Account, the great Evil of Sin consists in its being against GOD. *Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned.*

Here I will attempt to shew,

- I. *How, and in what Respects, Sin is against GOD.*
- II. *How great an Evil it is on that Account.*
- III. *That this is the great Evil of Sin.*

Which Heads being gone through, I shall offer some Remarks, and then apply the whole to our own Use.

I am to shew,

- I. *How, and in what Respects, Sin is against GOD.*

And here,

1. *Sin is contrary to the Nature of God.*—A sinful Nature and a holy Nature are in direct Opposition; they are a perfect Contrariety to each other. *The carnal Mind is Enmity against God.*|| And Sin is *that abominable Thing which God's Soul abhors.*† The holy one of Israel is a Being of infinite Understanding, and of perfect Rectitude; and has a complete and comprehensive View of all Things; and in all Cases sees what is right & fit & beautiful to be done—how the DEITY should be loved and honoured in the World which he has made—and how his Creatures and Subjects should live together in mutual Love and Benevolence, and not an unjust or cruel Act be ever done thro'out all his Dominions. And as God sees what is right and fit and beautiful, and what is contrary; so he is accordingly affected towards Things. *He loves Righteousness, and hates Iniquity.** — Let God be esteemed, revered, honoured and obeyed—Let Love and Good-will prevail and be established among his Subjects — Let every Thing of a contrary Savour be eternally banish'd his Dominions; and God will be well pleased: But if any Dishonour is done to the DEITY, or Injury to our Fellow-Subjects, nothing can displease him more: for there is nothing he hates like Sin: It is *the abominable Thing which his Soul hates.* Sin is more odious and detestable to him, than the most abominable Thing on Earth is to us. His Aversion to it is vehement beyond the Conception of any finite Mind.

B 2

His

His Aversion to it is absolutely infinite.— In this Respect therefore Sin is against God. It is a going directly contrary to his Nature ; and that in the most tender Point ; in a Thing which comes nearest his Heart. Nothing is so cross to him, nothing can disoblige him so much, or displease him, or grieve his Heart, like this.— As when a Man's Wife departs from him, and commits Whoredom with another Man, and breaks his Heart by her ill Carriage : So, says God, *I am broken with their whorish Heart.* * And therefore, says he, to his beloved People, *If ye will not for all this bear ken unto me, but WALK CONTRARY unto me : then,* such a Conduct would be so intolerably provoking, I will not, I cannot bear it, but *I will WALK CONTRARY unto you also in FURY.* † But a sinful Conduct is called a *walking contrary to God*, in Scripture, not only because it is thus in direct Contrariety to the divine Nature : but also because

2. Sin is against the Law, Authority and Government of Almighty GOD — For, as God hates Sin with an infinite hatred ; so he has with the utmost Engagedness forbidden it : saying, *Cursed is every one, that continues not in ALL Things written in the Book of the Law, to do them.* ||—As Governor of the World He sets up himself against Sin ; forbidding it with *all his Authority*, and standing ready to punish it with *all his Power* : and it is even one main End of his universal Government, to discountenance and suppress it, throughout all his Dominions.

No doubt, Almighty GOD has Right to govern the World ; for originally He is absolute LORD of it ; and by

NATURE

* Ezek. vi. 9. *I am broken with their whorish Heart.* From the Covenant-Relation between God and his People Israel, they are said to be married unto him, Jer. iii. 14. and hence, their going from God to Idolatry is called Whoredom. And to prefer an Idol before the true God was a very provoking thing : Therefore he says, *I am broken with their whorish Heart.* But to prefer a vile Lust before God seems to be in like Manner provoking : it is a Kind of spiritual Idolatry. And yet, this is done in every Act of Sin. No Sin can be committed, but God is grieved. Eph. iv. 30.

† Lev. x. vi. 27, 28. || Gal. iii. 19.

NATURE he is GOD MOST HIGH: and his GOD-HEAD and his LORDSHIP give him an undoubted Right of Government. And accordingly He has taken the Throne, set Himself up at the Head of the Universe, and undertaken the Government of all Things, and especially of the whole System of Intelligences.— And,

No doubt, his Government is WORTHY to be universally submitted unto: for it is all perfect and glorious. His Laws and his Dispensations are perfect in Wisdom, Rectitude and Goodness: and even as He himself is infinitely worthy of all Love and Veneration, so that his very Being affords infinite Ground of Joy among his Creatures; even so his Government is just like himself, and exhibits his very Image, and is WORTHY universally to be rejoiced in. As it is written, *The Lord reigneth; let the Earth rejoyce.**

Wherefore it is the *fittest* and *happiest* Thing in the World, to be, and do, just what he requires: And in his Favour, and under the Protection of his almighty Arm, there must be the most absolute Safety and Security.— So that it might reasonably have been expected, that all his Subjects, thro'out all his Dominions, would join to say, LET GOD REIGN FOR EVER; and that they would all, with one Heart, have exulted at the Thought of being in Subjection to such a KING.

But the Sinner comes in, and dissents from his whole Constitution, and that both in Heart and Life. “As for his Law,” says he, “I do not like it, and will not obey it. As for his Authority, I do not own it, and will not regard it. As for his universal Government and glorious Kingdom, it is not to my Mind—I revolt—I will not have him *to reign over me*. || I can prescribe better Rules to live by. I will not be dependent on him, nor in subjection to him.” Thus the Sinner revolts from his Government, casts off his Authority, breaks his Law, and in the language of Scripture, *rebels against the Lord*. For, in Scripture, THIS is always considered as GOD’S WORLD, He

our rightful LORD and KING; and all our Duty is enjoined, and all Sin is forbidden, by his AUTHORITY; and therefore every Act of Sin is considered as an Act of *Rebellion against the Lord*, and Sinners have the Character of *Rebels*.*

Now, in as much as God stands ready, at the Head of the Universe, to employ his infinite Wisdom & almighty Power, to discountenance all Rebellions, and suppress and crush all obstinate Rebels, and maintain good Government thro' out his Dominions; so that, Things being thus, there is no Way for the obstinate Rebel to escape an eternal Overthrow, and everlasting Shame and Contempt: it is therefore in his Heart, to wish the ALMIGHTY dethroned, his whole Government overturned, and the Sword of Justice wrested from Him. And had he sufficient Power on his Side, the latent Temper of his Heart would soon form into the terrible Resolution; nor would he delay venturing on the dreadful Attempt.—Thus, Sin is against the Law, Authority, and universal Government of Almighty GOD. Hence, God esteems the Sinner as his *Enemy*: and accordingly, Sinners are called *Enemies to God*, in Scripture. || And are said to be even *Enmity against him*.† And they are not, says the Apostle, *subject to the divine Law, neither indeed can be*.

And this leads me to add, that

3. Sin is against the Being of God.—For, since God is at the Head of the Universe (as was before said) and unchangeably determined to maintain good Government through-

* Deut. ix. 24. Ezek. xx. 8. 13, 21. || Rom. v. 10. Col. i. 21.
† Rom. viii. 7. *The carnal Mind is Enmity against God*. N. B. The Apostle means here to give the Character of every Christless Sinner.—For to be carnally minded and to be in the *Flesh*, is one and the same Thing, in the Language of the Apostle; as is evident from ver. 8. But he looks upon all as *being in the Flesh*, who have not the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them; as is plain from ver. 9. And those who have not the Spirit of Christ, are none of his, ver. 9. Every Christless Sinner is therefore in the *Flesh*, and at Enmity against God. This is the Doctrine of St. Paul. And just thus God looks upon every unregenerate Sinner; however they look upon themselves.—And no wonder; for let Subjects conduct so towards an earthly Prince, as all unregenerate Sinners do towards God, and their Prince would look upon them as *Enemies*.
Read Luk. xix. 14, 27.

out all his Dominions, and possessed of an almighty, irresistible Power ; there is no hope, that the obstinate Rebel should escape Punishment, *so long as God lives* : for so long as God lives, God will reign : and so long as God reigns supreme, obstinate Rebels cannot escape : for God's Determination to punish Sin is immutable as his very Being : and therefore if God lives, the impenitent Sinner must die. — But those, who are Enemies to God, had rather there should be *no God*, than that themselves should be punished.

When once a Creature has become so vile and impious, as to revolt from the Government of the MOST HIGH, and begin Rebellion, and enter the Lists against the ALMIGHTY ; if left to himself, without any Restraint, or hope of Mercy, (and we know, God was not obliged, to open a Door of Hope, to any Rebel in his Dominions,) and if armed with sufficient Power to bear down all before Him ; we may easily guess, to what Length he would carry Things. The same Disposition, which moved him to begin Rebellion, would naturally excite him to go on. By his first Act of Rebellion his Life and Soul are for ever forfeited, according to Law, and might justly have remained so. To repent, and undo what he had done, and humble himself, and sue for Mercy, is what a Sinner, in such a Case, would never do. And as to the threatned Punishment, he could never think of bearing that. He would venture upon the boldest and the most DREADFUL Deeds, but that he would carry his Point : Deeds, almost too dreadful to think of, and hardly fit to hint at. — *Who soever hateth his Brother, is a Murderer,** as it is written ; and would therefore murder his Brother, if left to his own Heart, without any Restraint, and having sufficient Ability and Opportunity in his Hands : What then would the Wretch do, who hates his Maker, is an Enemy to his God, and even Enmity against him ! — We see how a guilty World has treated the SON of God — We see how they have treated the *Prophets & Apostles*. † And we may easily guess what dreadful Work there would be, were the Sinner an over-match for OMNIPOTENCY. Such is the inexpressible Malignity of Sin.

4. Sin

* 1 Joh. iii. 15. † Mat. xxi. 33 — 39. Mat. xxiii. 29 — 37.

4. Sin is against the Honour of God. 'Tis even a despising the Lord, and a treating the MOST HIGH with Contempt. — All his *Perfections* are despised ; and consider'd as our *Creator, Preserver, Governour, Redeemer*, and the *Fountain of all Good*, he is despised by Sin.

Hear the contemptuous Language of the Sinner's Conduct. —
 " God sees you, O Sinner ! and will you dare to transgress ?
Yes, his all-seeing Eye shall not terrify me — " God is near at
 " Hand ! you are in his very Presence ! O Sinner, will
 " you venture to offend ? " *Yes, God's Presence shall not re-*
strain me : I don't regard him so much. — " But he is girded
 " with Strength, and hath an almighty Arm ; and you are but
 " a Worm, without Strength, and can make no Resistance.
 " will you dare to provoke him to Jealousy ? " *Yes,*
will do as I please, let him do his worst. — " But remember
 " he is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity ! Oh, there-
 " fore do not that abominable Thing, which his Soul hates !
I care not what he loves, nor what he hates : I will please my-
self, let him take it as he will. — " But consider, he is un-
 " changeably determin'd to render to every one according
 " to their Deeds, to him that doth Evil, Tribulation and
 " Wrath ! and who can stand before him, when once he is
 " angry ! for our God is a consuming Fire ! Therefore
 " O Sinner, forbear." *No, I'll not be restrained : I'll gratify*
my Lusts, at all Adventures. For I regard not his Threats. —
 " But he is a Being of infinite Goodness and Mercy, Patience
 " and Forbearance ; and this should lead you to a better
 " Mind, O Sinner !" *No, no, I despise his Goodness,*
Long-suffering and Forbearance ; and I can be hard-hearted
enough to go on, in spite of all his tender Mercies. —
 " But, O Sinner, infinite Wisdom pronounces, that this your
 " Way is your Folly ! and cries, Turn, O Turn at my Re-
 " proof ! lest otherwise, ere long, I laugh at your Calamity,
 " and mock when your Fear comes ! and will you not be
 " dictated by the infinitely wise God ? " — *No, no, I know*
what is best for my self, and that better than he does ; and I
chuse to be my own Director, and to walk in my own Ways.
 " But is he not the God that made you ? Have not his

" Hand

Hands formed you? Are you then your own? Are you not the Lord's? And ought you not therefore to be for him?" *I renounce the God that made me: I disown his Right to me: I will not be for him, but for my self; for I will please my self, altho' he is grieved.*—"But consider, He has nourished and bro't you up tenderly, as his own Child; & fed & cloathed you all your Life long! and will you be more sottish than the Ox and the Ass?" *Yes, Yes, after all, I will rebel against Him.*—"But how can you answer it? for He is your sovereign LORD and KING, you are under his Authority, bound by his Law, and accountable at his Tribunal: and you know what Threatnings he has given out. And now, if you have any Regard for him, in any Respect, how dare you go on?" *These Things move me not. I will walk in the Ways of my own Heart: nor will I be controuled. I know not the Lord, nor will I obey him. And in the midst of all his Thunders, I can be at Ease in Zion, and chant to the sound of the Viol.*—"But if you go on thus to despise the Lord, and to despise his Law, Authority & Government; what will be your End, O Sinner! will not his Wrath wax hot, and smoke against you, & consume you? Consider, therefor, how that after all this Wickedness he offers to be reconciled thro' Jesus Christ; and invites you to Repentance! **TURN YE, TURN YE, WHY WILL YE DIE!** and offers to be your God, and Father, and Portion. And now, what Answer do you make, O Sinner!" *Why, look on us, and observe our Conduct, and you and all the World may see, that we make light of it, and go our Ways, one to his Farm, and another to his Merchandize: whereby we plainly declare, that we despise the Grace of the Gospel, and had rather have the World for our Portion than God himself.*—Thus God, in every Point of Light, is disesteemed, disrespected, despised, and even treated with Contempt in the common Conduct of the Sinner.

Any vile Lust is preferred before all the Fulness of God. Those Things and Ways which please the Devil, God's inveterate Enemy, and the most malicious and hateful Being in the Universe, are chosen, before those Things and Ways which

which please *Jehovah*, the greatest and best of Beings. His Authority is trampled on, at whose Presence the Mountains melt and the Earth trembles. A Worm of the Dust sets up himself above the most high GOD, and his Will above God's, and his Interest above God's Glory. If God offers Heaven, Sin despises it: if he threatens Hell, Sin disregards it: If he pleads the dying Love of his SON, and the Riches of his Grace, and beseeches the Sinner to be reconciled, Sin slights it all: or if he commands Men to do their Duty to one another, Sin regards it not: and that notwithstanding his Right to us as his Creatures, and Authority over us as his Subjects, and our Obligations to him as the LORD OUR GOD. And thus the MOST HIGH is by Worms of the Dust treated with Disrespect and Contempt, and that to his Face, and in the Sight of the Sun, in his own World before his Creatures, before his Friends & Enemies; tending to bring a public Odium upon him & his Ways, and to countenance and encourage Rebellion throughout all his Dominions, and sink him and his Government into universal Discredit, and bring an everlasting Reproach upon his great Name: Thus Sin is against the *Honour* of God.—And upon this View of Things, may it not, in the

5th and last Place, justly be Enquired, Whether *Sin* is *not against the Happiness of GOD*, and whether it *does not open* such a Scene to his view, as naturally tends to grieve & distress such a Being as God is.

To look down from Heaven, the Throne of his Holiness and Glory, upon this World, which he has made for himself; and survey all Mankind, by Nature his Creatures, by Right his Subjects. designed to shew forth his Praise; and behold and see how they are revolted from his Government, turned Enemies to his Majesty, and combined together in Rebellion against his Crown and Dignity.—They are set on a Way which is not good, a Way most contrary to his Heart, full of Impiety towards God, and Injustice and Cruelty towards one another.—They disregard his Laws, trample under Foot his Authority, despise his Goodness, and bid Defiance to his Vengeance. — And they are so much against

him, that were their Influence and Power sufficient to carry the Point, they would soon take the Field.—The Tendency of their common Conduct is, to dethrone his Majesty, to overturn his Government of the Universe, to bring him into the deepest Contempt, and every Thing that is Right and Good into the utmost Disgrace, and to introduce Disorder, Confusion and Misery into his Dominions, and Rebellion which should spread like a contagious Pestilence throughout all his Kingdoms, until all his Subjects should revolt, and all join to treat him with Hatred & Contempt, and even wish him not to be.

And if the Sun in the *natural System* should be extinct, and all the Light turned into Darkness, and the whole natural World flung into the utmost Confusion, every Orb displaced, every Thing turned upside down, it would not represent half so dreadful and distressing a Scene; as would immediately be opened to View, could Sin, without Controul, and with Power irresistible, bear down all Good and Right before it, and rise up to all to that Height of Wickedness and Ruin, to which it naturally tends.— And would not such a moral System of Intelligences exhibit to view a Sight infinitely distressing to such a Being as God is, were it beyond his Power and Wisdom ever to regulate Things? But to such a Pass Sin tends to bring the moral World.

So far as we are able to conceive, it seems essential to every intelligent Being, to be liable to mental Pain and Distress, when they are crossed in the most tender Point; when their Nature and Will, Interest and Honour, and every Thing that is dear to them, is counteracted and despised, and, as it were, trampled under Foot: and they in the mean Time unable ever to regulate Things.—So it is evidently with Mankind; with bad and good.—*Abab* took to his Bed, and refused to eat; because *Naboth* denied him his *Vineyard*.* *Haman* was grieved to the Heart, because *Mordecai* would not bow to him. † The chief *Priests* were in Anguish, because the *Apostles* preached *Jesus* and the *Resurrection*, and filled *Jerusalem* with their Doctrine. ‡ And *Rivers of Waters*

ran down David's Eyes, because Men kept not God's Law; for that was a tender Point with him. || And *Jeremiah* was ready to be so afflicted, if the Jews would not hearken to their Duty, as in secret Places to weep for their Pride. †— And so it was with the Man Christ Jesus: He was grieved and distressed at the Hardness of Men's Hearts; * and wept over the obstinate Jews.**

And it is remarkable, that, in Scripture, God is constantly represented, as being affected in the same Manner as Men are; and such Words and Phrases are used, as denote painful and distressing Sensations, in order to set forth how he is affected with the vile Conduct of his Creatures. He is said to be grieved, wearied, to be made angry, to be provoked to Wrath, to be vexed; † forty Years long was I grieved with this Generation, says God, referring to the perverse Conduct of the Israelites in the Wilderness; unto whom, says he, I swear in my Wrath, that they should not enter into my Rest. †† And again, I am broken with their whorish Heart. † And I am pressed under you, as a Cart is pressed that is full of Sheaves. ¶ All which are strong Expressions, as used among Men, to denote and set forth Pain and Distress of Heart, at the Sight of something exceeding grievous.

Not that we are to suppose, that He, who is over all God blessed for ever, is indeed really pained and distressed at the Sight of the shocking Conduct of his rebellious Creatures. For, altho' he has a full comprehensive View of the whole of it; yet, at the same Time, he as plainly foresees to what a Result and Issue all Things will finally be brought, by his infinite Wisdom and almighty Power: whereby his Authority and Government will be but the more established throughout all his Dominions, and his Name and his Law but the more revered. And altho' a Number of obstinate Rebels will be eternally miserable, under the Punishment they justly deserve; yet, in the whole, God will be more glorious, and perhaps the System more happy too, than if Sin had never

|| Psal. cxix. 136. † Jer. xiii. 17. * Mar. iii. 5. ** Luk. xix. 41.
† Mai. lxiii. 10 †† Psal. xcv. 10, 21. † Ezez. vi. 9. ¶ Amos ii. 13

er been permitted, and Misery had been for ever unknown. Such Power and Authority has he over all Things to order and over-rule, and such is his Wisdom, and such his Holiness, Justice and Goodness, that he both knows he can, and knows he will, finally bring Good out of Evil, Light out of Darkness, Order out of Disorder, and Holiness, Harmony and Peace, out of all the Sin, Confusion and Uproar; and all that has happened shall, thro' a long Eternity, serve as a Means, in the Sight of all Worlds, to establish his Throne, confirm his Government, make his Law honourable, his Justice appear tremendous, his Grace glorious, and Sin an exceeding great and dreadful Evil. Therefore he enjoys a perfect Tranquillity and an undisturbed Felicity, altho' a World of Wickedness lies open to his View, and Millions of Things are transacted, which have a natural tendency to grieve him (and that not merely *forty Years long*, but from Age to Age ever since the World began)—to weary him—to vex his holy Spirit—to break his Heart—to press him as a Cart is pressed, that is full of Sheaves.

But no Thanks to the Sinner, that God is happy. He is no Friend to God's Felicity. His Ways tend to grieve and distress the HOLY ONE of *Israel*; and that which is God's Comfort, is a Terror to the Sinner. He dreads the Day when all Things shall be set to rights: and when the ALMIGHTY will *ease himself of his Adversaries*, and *avenge himself of his Enemies*. * Thus we see how Sin is against GOD: it is against his Nature,—Law, Authority, Government,—Being,—Honour,—Happiness.

And now,

II. I am to shew how GREAT the Evil of Sin is on this account.—The Evil of Sin, as has been observed, arises from our Obligations to do otherwise. And therefore the greater our Obligations are to God, the greater is the Evil of sinning against him. Our Obligations to love, honour & obey God, originally arise from his Worthiness to be loved, honoured & obeyed by us: But he is infinitely worthy to be loved, honoured & obeyed by us: therefore our Obligations to do so are infinite: and so, to sin against him must be esteemed infinite Evil.

But

But it is quite beyond our Capacity to comprehend the Vileness there is in treating God, as the Sinner does ; unless we could, as he can, comprehend all his *Greatness & Glory* and fully see all the *Grounds and Reasons* there are for us to Love, Reverence and Obey him, and feel all their binding Force.—God is fully conscious to himself, that he is infinitely worthy of all Love, Honour and Obedience, for what he is in Himself : besides that he is the Maker and Lord of the Universe ; the Maintainer & Upholder of the World and rightful King and Sovereign over all. He is fully conscious, there is infinite Reason for us to rejoyce in him, exult in his Government, and be glad in his Service ; and that the contrary Temper and Conduct of his Creatures, is infinitely unreasonable and wicked. And altho' we can't comprehend the *exceeding Vileness* of rising in Rebellion against the MOST HIGH ; yet we may be easily convinced, that it is an infinite Evil. Yea, if we are but really convinced that God is infinitely great and glorious, it will be to us self-evident, that he is infinitely worthy of all Love, Honour and Obedience : and that, consequently, to disrespect, disobey and disobey him, is infinitely vile. — 'Tis low and mean Thoughts of God, which causes secure Sinners to be insensible of the great Evil of Sin.—Those *Hereticks* who deny the infinite Evil of Sin, do but, by the Means, proclaim to the World their Ignorance of the DEITY.—Had not God known Sin to be an infinite Evil, he would never have threatened an infinite Punishment ; even, the eternal Pains of Hell where *the Worm shall never die, and the Fire shall never be quenched.* *—And were not Christ, our compassionate Redeemer, sensible of the infinite Evil of Sin, he could never feel it in his Heart, at the Day of Judgment, to say to the Wicked on his left Hand, *Depart ye Cursed, into EVERLASTING FIRE.* †—And were not all the Hosts of Heaven in the same Sentiment, they would never join to say, *Hallelujah, Salvation and Glory, and Honour and Power unto the Lord our God, for true and righteous are his Judgments—Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent Reigneth—* when they see the Smoke of their Torments ascending for ever and ever. || Yea, were

* Mar. ix. 44, 46, 48. † Mat. xxv. 41. || Rev. xix. i.—6.

Punishment apprehended to be justly deserved, it could answer any of the good Ends of Punishment in the moral World : but would for ever appear a great and dreadful smith in the divine Conduct, in the Sight of all intelligent beings. God himself could not approve of it, and would never do it.— And therefore, notwithstanding it is so contrary to the natural Sentiment of a Heart secure in Sin, yet we have sufficient Matter of Conviction, that there is really an infinite Evil in Sin, as it is against God. — And when these Heavens and this Earth, which are now *kept in Store, and reserved unto Fire, against the Day of Judgment, and Perdition of ungodly Men*, shall all be in a *Flame* and *melt with fervent Heat*, and the whole material System be *dissolved*, and *scapt together*, hurled into one general Heap (perhaps) to be everlastingly a Lake of Fire and Brimstone for the Punishment of the Ungodly : * I say, when God comes thus *to shew his Wrath, and make his Power known, in the Destruction of the Wicked* ; || It will make all intelligent Creatures, in Earth and Hell, effectually sensible, what an Evil Sin is, and how God stands affected towards it. † This visible Emblem of his Wrath, this immense Lake of Fire & Brimstone, will give an exact and infallible Comment upon God's Law, and shew, beyond Dispute, what the Threatning means : ‡ nor will it any more, throughout eternal Ages, at all be doubted, whether Sin be an infinite Evil.

And thus we have taken a brief and general View, of the Evil of Sin, as it is against God.— We might indeed here enter into a great variety of Particulars, and largely shew, how Sin, as it is against God, is aggravated on many Accounts ; not only considering merely what he is in himself, but the *Relations* he stands in to us, and we to him, our *Dependence* on him, his *Right* to us, his *Authority* over us, the *Greatness of redeeming Love*, the *freeness of Gospel-Grace*, &c. and it might be distinctly considered, how amazingly vile it is, for such as we be, to treat such a one as God is, in such sort, under such Circumstances, and notwithstanding such additional Bonds and Obligations lying upon us. — But I must omit this, and pass on

III. To

III. To prove, that *the GREAT EVIL of Sin consists in THIS, that it is against GOD.*—And this may easily appear. For a few Words may soon make it evident, that, altho' Sin may really be a very great Evil, as it is injurious to our Fellow-Men, or to our Selves; yet it is not so aggravated and heinous, by infinite Odds, in these Respects, as on Account of its being against GOD.—To injure our Fellow-Creatures is wrong, very wrong; but what is a Worm of the Dust compared to the LIVING GOD? *If one Man sin against another, the Judge shall judge him;* (and some Recompence may be made,) *but if a Man sin against the Lord, who will it treat for him?* (or make any Atonement for his Crime?) Yea, if by some Act of Sin we could do the greatest Injury to the whole Creation; yet what is the whole Creation compared with GOD, the ALMIGHTY CREATOR? It is all but as *a Dust of the Ballance, or a Drop of the Bucket.* We may ruin *our selves* by Sin; we may plunge our selves headlong into Destruction; but what are we, compared with the GREAT JEHOVAH? *Less than nothing and vanity.* And what is a guilty Rebel worth, compared with the MAJESTY of HEAVEN? To rise up in Rebellion against the GREAT GOD, go contrary to him, affront him and treat him with Contempt, is evidently the most wicked and heinous Thing that possibly can be done. For here the GREATEST and BEST of Beings is insulted: yea, a BEING who is infinitely better than all other Beings put together. This is therefore the greatest Evil there is in Sin by infinite Odds.

And accordingly thus we find the Matter stands in Scripture-Account. When Men are guilty of such wicked Deeds as are injurious to Themselves, or to their Fellow-Creatures, yet by God, the righteous Judge, they are blamed and punished for these Sins, principally and chiefly, under the Notion of their being committed *against the LORD.*—Thus when the *Israelites* were disheartned by the evil Report of the *Spies*, and refused to go up against the *Canaanites*, and talked of making *Captains*, and returning to *Egypt*; altho'

is Conduct tended to disinherit themselves and their Posterity of the Land of *Canaan* for ever, yet it is not on this account, chiefly, that they were blamed, and so dreadfully punished (Nay, it is not so much as once mentioned, to aggravate their Crime, or to shew the Justice of their Punishment) But it was all because they had *sinned against the LORD*.—God had said, that he would drive out the Nations before them : but they would not believe him. God had commanded them to go up & take Possession : but they would not obey him. They did not believe he would be as good as his Word ; they were afraid to run such a Venture, as to trust his Fidelity ; they had rather rebel against his Command, return to *Egypt*. Wherefore God is represented as being greatly affronted & provoked, and as *swearing in his Wrath*, that *they should never enter into his Rest*. * *As truly as I live, saith the Lord, your Carcases shall fall in this Wilderness*. † But why was God so angry ? *Because they had rebelled against the Lord*, ‡ *would not believe him*, § *nor hearken to his Voice* : † i.e. Not because their Conduct was to their own Damage, but because it offered an Affront to God. Altho' it does not appear, that they had acted with a Design to affront the ALMIGHTY ; but rather from a Principle of Self-Preservation. Just as Sinners now a-days do, who turn their Backs upon the heavenly *Canaan*, and lust after the *Leeks* and *Onions* of *Egypt*, the Pleasures of Sin, not with any Design to affront God ; but from Self-Love, and to gratify the Desires of their Hearts, all in pursuit of Happiness. But yet really in Fact they turn their Backs upon the ALMIGHTY, and despise his Commands ; and for their offering this Affront to the DEITY, Damnation is threatned ; and not so much because they go contrary to their own Interest.—And so again, there is the Instance of *David*, who, it is plain, had no Design to affront the MOST HIGH : but first he meant to gratify his Lust with *Uriah's* Wife ; & afterwards contrived to save his Credit by taking away *Uriah's* Life : yet observe his *Charge* and his *Reproof* from the Mouth of the Lord—*Because thou hast despised the Lord, & despised the Commandment of the Lord, and given the enemies of the Lord occasion to blaspheme ; therefore so and so will I punish you*. ** Therefore says *David* to God, *Against*

R

Daniel

Thee, Thee only, have I sinned.— See also that Confession in *Daniel ix. 9—12.* And that large Representation of the Nature of what passed between God and his People of old, and the Reasons and Grounds of the Judgments inflicted upon them, in *Ezek. xx.* throughout. — The Scripture even supposes, that all Manner of Sin, of what Kind soever, is committed against the Lord, who is constantly considered as GOVERNOUR of the World ; and therefore the Sinner is viewed as a *Rebel.* — But to *rebel against the Lord*, is to *despise him*, and to *despise his Commands*, in Scripture-Account.—But to *despise GOD MOST HIGH*, is infinitely more vile, than to injure such Worms of the Dust, as we Mortals, because God is *infinitely greater and better.* * This therefore is the *great Evil in Sin*, which is respected, when *temporal Judgments* are threatened in the *old Testament*, and when *eternal Damnation* is threatened in the *New* : so that it is evidently a Point, every where in the *BIBLE*, taken for granted, that the great *EVIL* of Sin consists in its being committed *against GOD.*

Having

* *To despise God most high, is infinitely more vile, than to injure such Worms of the Dust, as we Mortals ; because God is infinitely greater & better.* —

Therefore, (1.) We are under infinite Obligations to Virtue, antecedent to any selfish Considerations. And so (2.) There is an infinite Evil in Sin, over and above its natural Tendency to promote the Misery of our Selves or Neighbours.---And consequently (3.) It deserves an infinite Punishment to be inflicted, over and above that *Pain* which naturally results from it.---And hence (4.) A rational Account may be given of the *Eternity of Hell Torments.*---And (5.) We may see why such an Atonement for Sin was needful, as the Blood of the SON of GOD. And now also (6.) We may see the true Nature of the *modern Scheme of Divinity.* — They say, — Our great Obligation to Virtue arises from its Tendency to make us happy ; --- therefore the great Evil of Sin consists in its Tendency to make us miserable : — and so Sin is not an infinite Evil. — nor does it deserve an infinite Punishment, nor will Hell-Torments be eternal : — nor was an infinite Satisfaction to divine Justice needful, — nor indeed, strictly speaking, any Satisfaction to divine Justice at all : — So, no Need of a GOD for our Redeemer : — Hence, Christ Jesus was but a mere Man ; — and the Gospel, only the *Religion of Nature* republished & reinforced, &c. &c. — It is all because they know not the Lord. As it is written, *The Fool saith in his Heart, There is no God : corrupt are they.* For having no Sense of God upon their Hearts, or of the Importance of his Honour and Glory ; they are prepared to imagine, that the Happiness of the Creature is of

Having thus gone thro' with what was proposed, some Remarks may be made, and then the whole be applied to our own Use.

REMARK I. *How different a Thing is SIN from what an apostate rebellious World naturally imagine!*—How blind are we naturally to the infinite Greatness, Majesty and Glory of GOD! How insensible of the Honourableness of the almighty Lord of Heaven and Earth, and of his Worthiness to be loved, honoured and obeyed!—If any of our Fellow-Mortals despise, affront or injure us, they touch, as it were, the Apple of our Eye: but God may be abused, and we take little or no Notice of it. A thousand Times Men break his Laws, and a thousand Times they despise & affront him by their sinful Doings; while they are possessed of such a prodigious Degree of Stupidity, as not to pass a single Tho't upon it. And should any charge them with *despising the Lord*, there are many would be ready to say (with those *Mal. 1. 6.*) *Wherein have we despised him?* “You despise God in your Closets, in your Family-Worship, in your publick Worship, and at the Lord's Table: and yet, O secure Sinner, will you still say, *Wherein do I despise him?* You give your choicest Affections to Idols, and offer *the Blind and the Sick to the Lord*: yea, a *blind* and a *dead* Heart.—Is it not burdensome to maintain secret Prayer? and more tedious to spend an Hour alone with God, than a whole Day with vain Company? And is not this to despise the Lord? Offer such Treatment to your Companions? Let them see that you are weary of their Company; even then, when you are waiting upon them with

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Pretences

the greatest Importance of any Thing in Heaven or Earth. As tho' the Creature were better than the Creator----which is to make a God of the Creature----which prepares the Way in their Scheme, to make a Creature of GOD, i. e. of *Jesus Christ, who is over all GOD blessed forever*,—who yet, say they, is but a mere Creature. — For valuing themselves so high, and GOD so low, hence they see but little or no Evil in Sin as it is *against God*: and so feel little or no want of a Redeemer, or of an Atonement: so no need of a GOD, to interpose and die in their Behalf: a meer Creature might answer all the Ends needful: therefore they are prepared to think *Jesus Christ* was no more: and it is not what the *Scripture* says, but what suits with their own No-

“ Pretences of the greatest Respect : and will they accept
 “ it at your Hands ? or be pleased with your Conduct ? Be-
 “ sides, you are continually despising God in your daily
 “ Course, by a Disposition to take greater Delight in the
 “ Things of the World, and in the Way of Sin, than in the
 “ ever blessed God : and by a Disposition to love your self
 “ more than Him ; and be more concerned for your Honour
 “ and Interest in the World, than for God’s Glory
 “ and the Interest of his Son’s Kingdom.— And you de-
 “ spise the Lord, and despise the Commandments of the
 “ Lord, in every of your Thoughts, Words and Actions
 “ that are in any Measure injurious to your Fellow-Crea-
 “ tures.”—But such is the Sottishness of a secure Sinner, that
 he scarce passes a single Thought upon it, for Days and
 Weeks and Months and Years, how the infinitely glorious
 and ever-blessed GOD, is by him continually affronted and
 despised.

But, turn the Tables— Let the secure Sinner meet with
 Abuses from his Neighbours : let him be despised : let him
 be scorned : let even his Inferiours treat him with Contempt
 let his Name be cast out as evil, by all Men : let every Man’s
 Hand be against him, to defraud him in their Dealing with
 him, to disappoint him and vex him : And now he will feel
 it ; it will reach his Heart ; he will think of it Night and
 Day ; aggravate it continually ; and be ready to cry out
 “ Never was Mortal abused as I am ! Never were there such
 “ wicked Doings in the World before ! ”

If GOD is despised, affronted, and abused ; the Sinner’s
 Heart is a *Heart of Stone* : he can’t feel it : for he does not
 care for God.—But let it come to his own Case ; and his
 Heart is a *Heart of Flesh*, very tender ; as tender as the Ap-
 ple of one’s Eye : every Thing touches him to the quick
 for he loves himself dearly.—If God is abused and injured
 an apostate World care little about it : but if themselves are
 wronged, it is highly resented.—Hence, this is the *Doctrine*
 of ungodly selfish Hearts, viz. THE GREAT EVIL OF SIN
 CONSISTS IN ITS BEING AN INJURIOUS THING TO us
 Nor, indeed, is it very strange, that a rebellious World care

little for God's Honour. For this is the Nature & Way of *Rebels* in earthly Kingdoms ; when they have cast off their rightful Sovereign, and turned Enemies to him, they care not what becomes of him, nor how he is treated. Their only Concern is about themselves, and to secure their own Welfare. In order to which, they may do many toilsom and heroic Deeds, and call them by the Name of VIRTUE, * which Virtue of theirs they may honour and reward, and labour

Call them by the Name of VIRTUE.——When MILTON has represented *Satan*, the mighty Chief among the Powers of Darkness, as willing, at all Adventures, to undertake a Voyage from Hell to Earth, in order to seduce Man, and find out for the mselves a Habitation more comfortable than that burning Lake : he introduces all the *infernal Crew*, as paying a publick Honour to his VIRTUE.

“ ————— They rose :

“ ————— Towards him they bend

“ With awful Reverence prone ; and as a God

“ Extol him equal to the highest in Heaven :

“ Nor fail'd they to express how much they prais'd,

“ That for the general Safety he despis'd

“ His own : (for neither do the Spirits damn'd

“ Lose all their *Virtue* ; lest bad Men should boast

“ Their specious Deeds on Earth, which Glory excites ;

“ Or close Ambition varnish'd o'er with Zeal.) ”

Milton, *Paradise lost*, Book ii. lin. 575.

And in the same *Page*, in very beautiful Lines, he intimates, what indeed is agreeable to our SAVIOUR's Words, *Matt. xii. 25, 26.* that there is a great Appearance of Love and good Agreement among *Devils* : the Kingdoms of this World are *divided* against themselves ; but *Satan's* Kingdom is not.—— And elsewhere the following Lines.

“ O Shame to Men ! Devil with Devil damn'd

“ Firm Concord holds, Men only disagree,

“ Of Creatures rational, though under hope

“ Of heav'nly Grace : and, God proclaiming Peace,

“ Yet live in Hatred, Enmity and Strife

“ Among themselves, and levy cruel Wars,

“ Wasting the Earth, each other to destroy :

“ As if (which might induce us to accord)

“ Man had not hellish Foes enow besides,

“ That, Day and Night, for his Destruction wait ”

Par. Lost. Book ii. l. 496.

And

labour to countenance & promote it ; but it is all the while only to serve their own Ends. And they are nevertheless a Company of *Rebels*, in the Estimation of their rightful Sovereign.—The Application is easy.

REM. 2. *How amazing is the Patience of God, towards a rebellious guilty World ! and how astonishing the divine Goodness, which sends Rain and fruitful Seasons, filling their Hearts with Food and Gladness ; when Hell is their proper Place, and the Pains of the Damned their just Desert !*—God looks down from Heaven upon the Children of Men, and beholds the Work of his Hands combin'd in Rebellion against him, their rightful Sovereign : contemning his Nature and Will, despising his Law and Authority, and of a Temper bad enough to dethrone him, and overturn his universal Government, had they sufficient Power on their Side : and conscious to his own infinite Glory, and to the Reasonableness and Excellency of his Government, and the infinite Obligations his Creatures are under to him ; he has an adequate Idea of the infinite Vileness of their Temper & Conduct, and of the infinite Provocation they give him, immediately to come out against them : yet he stays his Hand : He holds back Destruction : He waits upon a guilty World from Age to Age ; and feeds and cloaths the Wretches that affront him to his Face. But

REM. 3.

And yet the little Appearance of *publick Love* and *publick Spirit* there is among Mankind, altho' not so well united among themselves as *Devils* be, is by some *Writers* wonderfully applauded, as *true Virtue*, and used as an unanswerable Argument, to prove that Mankind *naturally* have, in a Measure, that *moral Image* of God, which 'tis acknowledged the *Devils* have totally lost : and that notwithstanding we are represented in Scripture as being *dead in Sin* (Eph. iii. 1.)—by *Nature Children of Wrath* (ver. 3.) --- *Enemies to God* (Rom. v. 10.) --- *Enmity against him* (Rom. viii. 7.)

¶ *Yet he stays his Hand.* N. B. It is, in Scripture, attributed to the *GREATNESS* of *GOD's Power*, that he is able to contain Himself, and to keep back his Hand from destroying the God-provoking Sinner immediately. *Numb. xiv. 17.* And had he not a Strength and Fortitude of Mind infinitely great, it would doubtless be beyond him to bear with Mankind a Minute longer. Such infinite Provocations would be too much for any but an infinite Patience.

REM. 3. *How dreadful will the Day of Wrath be ! and how miserable the State of the obstinate Sinner ! when God's Patience shall be at an End, and his Hand shall take hold on Vengeance, and render a Recompence to the Wicked, equal to the infinite Evil of their Sins.*—If one Sin, and the least Sin, has so great an Evil in it, and deserves so great a Punishment ; how dreadful must their State be, who have committed Hundreds and Thousands and Millions of Sins, and Sins of the largest Size, wherein they have cast the greatest Contempt on the MOST HIGH, Millions of Times over ! Their Torments must be, not only eternal, but exceeding intense and very dreadful. The least Sin deserves eternal Damnation ; * every Degree of Guilt deserves a proportionable Degree of Punishment ; the more guilty, the more miserable : † the Torments of the Damned will therefore be not only eternal in Duration, but most dreadful in Degree. Hence it is written, that God will *shew his Wrath and make his Power known* in their Destruction. || His Power was made known in creating the Heavens and the Earth : and by the same Power these Heavens and Earth, which are now *kept in Store, reserved unto Fire, against the Day of Judgment, and Perdition of ungodly Men* ; I say, by the same Power, which first created them, they shall at last be *dissolved, burnt up, melted* ; and so be turned into a *Lake of Fire and Brimstone* : and when *the Heavens shall pass away with a great Noise*, all in a Flame, and the whole material Universe be hurled together to one general Heap, then his *Power will be made known*. ‡ — And when he will *shew his Wrath*. Now God is insulted and despised by Worms of the Dust ; and yet is very bountiful to his Enemies, and seems to take no Notice of their Affronts. As it is written, *These Things hast thou done, and I kept Silence*. † or now is the Time for Patience to reign : But when the *Day of Wrath* comes, ** God will let all the World see and know, how infinitely vile it is, for Worms to rise in Rebellion against the MOST HIGH. When *the Heavens begin to be on Fire*, and the *Elements to melt with fervent Heat*, a guilty World will begin effectually to be roused to a Sense of what they have done. Now God will *shew his Wrath* ; and a rebellious World will feel their Guilt.

REM.

Gal. iii. 10.

|| Rom. ix. 22.

† Psal. l. 21.

Rom. ii. 6.

‡ 2 Pet. iii. 7, 10, 12.

** Rom. ii. 5.

REM. 4. *How far beyond the Capacity of any finite Creature is it, to make Amends to God for the least Sin, which calls for such an infinite Contempt upon the Most High!—A Worm may rise in Rebellion against the great Jehovah, and may despise God, & despise the Commandments of God, and make a light Matter of it: But if he would give Thousands of Rams, and ten Thousands of Rivers of Oil, to make Amends for his Crime, it would not answer. Yea, if he would give his First-born for his Transgression, and the Fruit of his Body for the Sin of his Soul, it would not avail.* It is easy, for a haughty Worm to despise the Majesty of Heaven: but it is beyond the Reach of all created Nature, to make a proper Amends to God for such an Injury. It is, even between Man & Man, easier to do Wrong, than to undo it: but it is clean beyond the whole Creation, to make Amends to God for the least Sin. For it requires an infinite Atonement: but if all finite Creatures in Heaven and Earth should join together to do & suffer the utmost, it would not amount to any Thing infinite. — And besides, What can a Creature do towards making the least Degree of Atonement for Sin? For, what he does, must either be, what God requires, or what God does not require. If it be what God does not require, God will not accept of it; for there is no Virtue in it: And if it be no more than what God requires, it is no more than his Duty. And he paying a present Debt, can't atone for a Fault that is past. The Creature is not his own, he wholly belongs to God, and all that he hath; he has nothing therefore to give to God, but what is his own already. If he gives himself to God wholly to God, it is the most that he can do: and yet he was wholly the Lord's before. It is beyond the Capacity of the Creature, therefore, to make the least Degree of Atonement for Sin. He may justly lie under the whole Guilt, and be exposed to the whole Punishment of it, notwithstanding the utmost he can do: If ever he is saved, therefore, it must be by free Grace thro' Jesus Christ.*

REM. 5. *How absolutely necessary was it, that our REDEEMER should be GOD!—For otherwise, he could have nothing properly his own; and so nothing to offer, for*

make Atonement. But being by Nature GOD, he is now naturally his own; and so may offer to God, that which is his own, and that which is of infinite Worth too. A Being of infinite Dignity can make an infinite Atonement. And such an Atonement it was, that we needed. Without such an Atonement, we must have perished. Therefore, *God purchased his Church with his own Blood.* *

REM. 6. *How great is the Goodness of God, that he could find it in his Heart, to give his only begotten SON to die for such an apostate, rebellious, guilty Race!* A Race, which had treated him so vilely, that in Honour he could not pardon them,—the Honour of himself, of his Holiness and Justice, of his Law and Government, and sacred Authority, would not allow of their being pardoned, — unless *his own Son*, equal to himself in Power and Glory, were *set forth to be a Propitiation for Sin.*† A Race, that are habitually inclined to despise him, cast off his Government, walk contrary to him; and who, were they able, would soon join in the most impious Attempt against his Crown and glorious Dignity.—O! that he could find in his Heart, to love and pity them; and this, to so great a Degree, as to give his *only begotten SON* to die in their Stead; and now, thro' him, offer to be reconciled, and invite them to return, and tender them pardon, Peace and eternal Life;—This is the *most astonishing Goodness!*

A P P L I C A T I O N.

NOW, are you convinced of these Truths? Do you look upon Sin in this Light? Are you sensible, that all is thus *against God*, against his Nature, Law, Authority, Honour, &c.?—Do you know, that this is God's World? That you are God's Creatures and Subjects? That he is your Lord and Owner? That he has an entire Right to you, and an absolute Authority over you? That you are entirely dependent upon Him, infinitely indebted to him, absolutely under his Government?—And do you know, that the LORD your GOD is a GREAT GOD, and a

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GREAT KING, infinitely worthy of all Love, Honour and Obedience?—And do you see what a *great Evil* it is, to rise in Rebellion against the MOST HIGH, slight his Authority, throw off his Government, break his Law, go contrary to Him, do the abominable Thing which his Soul hates? Do you see what Contempt this casts upon God? And how it tends to grieve his Heart? For a Worm to set up against the ALMIGHTY! For a Creature, absolutely dependent, to turn his Back upon his Creator, in whose Hand his Life and Breath is, and whose are all his Ways! To love Sin more than the infinitely glorious God! To delight in earthly Pleasures more than in the supreme Fountain of all Good! To be more concerned to please Fellow-Rebels and secure their Favour, than to please the sovereign Lord of the Universe, and secure his Favour! Do you see the infinite Malignity of such a Conduct?

Oh Sinner! if you never saw the *great Evil* of SIN, you are to this Day a Stranger to God, and blind to the infinite Beauty of his Nature; and are to this Day under the Power of Sin, and in an impenitent & unpardoned State. Never was a Sinner pardoned, while impenitent: never was a Sinner truly penitent, while insensible of the great Evil of Sin, and never did a Sinner see the great Evil of Sin, before he was first acquainted with the infinitely great and glorious God.—You may indeed have been sorry for Sin on other Accounts; as, that you have exposed your self to Shame before Men; or hurt your Estate; or bro't God's Judgment upon you in this Life; or exposed your self to his Judgments in the Life to come: Or, perhaps, in Times past, you have been greatly awakened, and terrified, and then filled with Joy and even ravished, thro' a false, but confident Persuasion your Sins were pardoned; and in Consequence of this, from natural Gratitude, have felt real Grief, for your Sins against God, considered *merely* as your *great Benefactor*.^{*} But if you never saw the great Evil of Sin, as it is against a God who is infinitely

^{*} That those religious Affections, which Men may have towards God, considered *merely* under the Notion of a *Benefactor*, are not of the Nature of saving Grace, is evident from Job i. 9, 10, 11. & Matth. v. 46.

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infinitely glorious in himself, your Repentance was never genuine : and you are yet unpardoned.

Here it may be observed, that, if ever Men were thro'ly convinced of this great Evil of Sin, the Conviction would be permanent and abiding. For where true Grace is ever wrought in the Heart, it will continue. The *Water*, that *Christ* gives, will be in us a never-failing Fountain, *a Well of Water, springing up into everlasting Life.* † Those, therefore, who were greatly terrified with their Sin & Guilt some Years ago, but have since learnt to make a light Matter of Sin, and can easily get quiet, and go on in their evil Ways, they never truly saw the great Evil of Sin.—Yea, I may add, that where true Grace was ever wrought in the Heart, it will not only continue, but increase ; *like the Mustard-Seed, which grows into a Tree* ; ‖ and so a Sight and Sense of the great Evil of Sin will consequently increase and strengthen. For as Men grow in the Knowledge of God and Sense of his Glory, and of their Obligations to him : so proportionably will they see more and more of the infinite Evil there is in Sin, as it is against him.—The Case therefore may soon be decided against all those, who were once awakened and enlightened, but have since fallen away, and returned *with the Dog to his Vomit*, and with the *Sow that was washed to her wallowing in the Mire.* * Their Eyes never were truly opened : the *Heart of Stone* was never taken away : They never tasted the Bitterness of Sin to good Purpose : and they are still in the *Gall of Bitterness, and Bonds of Iniquity* : ‡ And must return to their Awakenings and Sorrows again, in this World, or in the World to come.

Answer me, to these six Questions.

1. Does God's Government appear reasonable, and his Law just ?—Behold, and see how God governs the World ; observe how he looks upon Sin, and how he treats it.—The *sinning Angels*, for their first Transgression, are turned out of Heaven, and doomed to an eternal Hell.—Our *fallen World*

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too,

† Joh. iv. 14. ‖ Matt. xiii. 31, 32. * 2 Pet. ii. 22. ‡ Act. viii. 23.

too, but for the Interposition of a Mediator, had sunk into eternal Ruin.—Every *impenitent Sinner* will, at the Day of Judgment, be sentenced to depart to everlasting Burnings.—Now, does it appear reasonable, that Sin should be so severely punished?—In *Heaven*, they cry, *Hallelujah ! just and righteous are thy Judgments, Lord God Almighty !* But what is the Language of your Heart ? Say, do you approve God's Government ? or be you an Enemy to it ?—And, in all this, God does but proceed exactly according to LAW. For the *Law* says, *Cursed is every one that continues not in all Things.**—Now, do you heartily approve the *Law* as *strictly just*, that threatens eternal Damnation for the least Sin ? Does Sin appear so great an Evil, as to deserve, in all Reason and Justice, to be so severely punished ? Put it to your own Case ; and can you justify God and his Law ?

2. *Can you justify God in his present Dispensations towards you ?* How are you actually affected under those Chastisements, which God inflicts upon you for Sin in this World ?—When God told *David*, that for his Sins, his *Wives should be defiled in the Sight of the Sun*, the *Sword never depart from his House*, and his *Child should die* ; † penitent *David* says, *Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this Evil in thy Sight : wherefore thou art just when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest.* And when, afterwards, he fled out of *Jerusalem*, from the Face of *Abjolom*, and *Shimei* cursed him, and said, *Come out, come out, thou bloody Man !* broken-hearted *David* said, *The Lord hath bidden him, Let him alone.* ‖ For he plainly saw, he deserved it at the Hands of God.—And is it the native Language of your Heart, when God lays his Hand heavy upon you — *Righteous art thou, O Lord !* † Can you justify God in his Dispensations towards you ? God always, in this World, *punishes us far less than our Iniquities deserve* : ‡ And a Sight of the great Evil of Sin will effectually make it appear so to us.

3. *Is it become natural to you, to look upon Hell as your proper Due, in such Sort, as that every Thing in your Circumstances,*

* Gal. iii. 13. † 2 Sam. xii. ‖ 2 Sam. xvi. Jer. xii. 1. ‡ Ezra ix. 13.

ances, wherein you are better on't than the Damned, appears
 mere, pure Mercy? Are you so vile, and Hell-deserving,
 in your own Account? Do you appear so, in your own
 Eyes, as in the Sight of God? And do you accordingly
 attribute all you have, that is better than Hell, to mere,
 pure Mercy? And go up and down the World, wondring
 at the Goodness and Patience of God? These Things na-
 turally arise from a Sight of the great Evil of Sin.

4. Do you deserve eternal Damnation, Now, to your own
 Sense and Apprehension, as much as ever you did? Be it so,
 that you have been brought to true Repentance for your
 past Sins, and have been sincerely devoted to God for these
 many Years, and that you live a Life of Penitency and
 godly Sorrow from Day to Day, and enjoy sweet Commu-
 nion with God, and a Sense of his Favour; and have good
 Hopes of eternal Life; yet, considered merely as in your
 self, in strict Justice, what do you deserve at the Hands of
 God? Do you deserve Hell still? And do you deserve it
 as much as ever you did? Or does it seem as if you had
 made some *Amends* for the Sins of former Years, by your
 Repentance and Piety since? Or does your daily Repen-
 tance make any *Amends* to God for your daily Short-com-
 ings? If you see the great Evil of Sin, it will be a clear
 Case to you, that you never did, nor ever can, make the
 least *Satisfaction* to God, for the least Sin. And therefore,
 instead of imagining, that you deserve better at the Hands
 of God than once you did, you will naturally see, that you
 are now more and more unworthy and ill-deserving. For,
 besides former Transgressions, there are your daily Short-
 comings, whereby you are continually meriting Hell, with-
 out doing any Thing, in the least Measure, to make *Amends*
 for what is past.

And now,

5. Do all your Hopes of finding Mercy at last, take their
 rise, only and absolutely, from the free Grace of God, thro'
 Christ, as revealed in the Gospel? St. Paul was doubtless
 one of the holiest Men, that ever lived: yet no Man seems
 so

so sensible of his own Vileness, and Need of *Christ* and free Grace. *The Law*, says he, *is spiritual*; But *I am carnal*, sold under Sin. *Oh wretched Man that I am!* † *I am less than the least of all Saints.** By the Deeds of the Law *Flesh can be justified.* ‖ And he ever looks to be justified by free Grace, thro' the Redemption that is in *Christ Jesus*. ‡ He is concerned, to be found, not in himself, having on his own Righteousness; but to be found in *Christ*, having on his Righteousness. † In a Word, it was his Character, to worship God in the Spirit, to rejoyce in *Christ Jesus*, and have no Confidence in the *Flesh*. ** And this, which was his Character, will be your Nature, if you really see the great Evil of Sin.

6. *Is it become natural to you, to be afraid of SIN, of Sin, as the greatest Evil?* Are you afraid of secret, as well as open Sins? Of sinful Thoughts, as well as sinful Actions? Of an ungracious, unholy Frame of Heart, as well as an unholy Life? Are you afraid of having your Heart turn away from God, the Fountain of all Good? Of losing Relish for secret Prayer? Of wandering Thoughts on the Sabbath, and at Sacrament? And are you afraid of what else ever tends thereto; such as, vain Company, a merry Way of Living, Love to the World, neglecting to watch the Heart? Do you make Conscience of walking with God, and of maintaining Communion with the most High, in your Closets, and Families, and in the House of God? Or does not a Round of Duties, and Form of Religion, content you? — Do you make Conscience of loving your Neighbour as your self, and doing as you would be done by; paying your Debts, at the Time agreed upon, and shewing Mercy to the Poor? Do you make Conscience of it, to bridle your Tongue, to avoid Tattling, and acting as busy-bodies in other Men's Matters? Do you make Conscience of it, not to mispend your Time in fruitless Visits, — at Taverns, — in Frolicks, or in any other vain or unprofitable Way: but to devote your Time and all your Talents, to the Service of God? — If you see your Obligations to God, you will make Conscience of pleasing him

† Rom. vii. 14, 24.

* Eph. iii. 8.

‖ Rom. iii. 20.

† Rom. iii. 24.

‡ Phil. iii. 8, 9.

** Phil. iii. 3.

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m in all Things. If you see the great Evil of Sin, you will be afraid of it in every Shape. If it appears to you as the *greatest of Evils*, you will be *most* afraid of it. You will be more afraid of Sin, than of any worldly Loss, or than of any reproach, or Shame, or Suffering, or than even of Death itself. However it may be with a good Man, for a Fit, this is his habitual Temper. * Indeed, in general, Men are but little afraid of Sin : they will go into the Way of it : they will run into Temptations, to Taverns, to Frolicks, to sin Company ; and care but little or nothing, about the love of God, and secret Prayer : no, nor so much as whether they are honest in their Dealings, and true to their promises : And yet, alas ! are ready to imagine themselves to be the Children of God.

However, an habitual Sense of the great Evil of Sin, is so essential to vital Piety, that without it, Men (let their past experiences and their present Pretences be what they will) are but mere *Hypocrites*. Their Repentance is counterfeit : their Faith is false : their Religion is all unsound. If you know not the great Evil of Sin, you *know nothing*, yet, *as you ought to know*. You are a Stranger to God, ignorant of your own Heart, and of the deplorable Condition you are in, and to this Day are unhumbled, impenitent and unpardoned. Wherefore, consider these Things, answer these Questions ; and see, and say, what is your State.

Oh ! how doleful is the State of secure, Christless Sinners ! At Enmity against God ! Rebels against the Majesty of Heaven ! Their Frame of Heart and Manner of Life, a continual despising the Lord ! a Grief to the *holy One of Israel* ! a constant Provocation ! And yet alas, they know not ; nor does it once enter into their Hearts : They go on at Ease, and are merry, as tho' all were well. And little think, what is just before them — The Day of Accounts drawing nigh — a Day of Darkness — of Gloominess — and of thick Darkness — and of great Wrath !

Awake,

Awake, O stupid Sinner ! Look round ; see what you do
 see where you are ; and consider what will be the End
Can your Hands be strong, or your Heart endure, O guilty
 Rebel, when GOD ALMIGHTY shall come forth to deal
 with you, according to your Crimes !——

Behold, now is a Day of Grace : and God is ready to be
 reconciled : a Door of Mercy is opened, by the Blood of
 the Son of GOD : Pardon and Peace are proclaimed to the
 rebellious, guilty World.—*Repent, therefore, and be converted*
that your Sins may be blotted out.—But if after your *Hardness*
and impenitent Heart, you will venture to go on, *treasuring up*
Wrath against the Day of Wrath ; you are like to know it
 to your everlasting Sorrow, that it is a fearful and horrible
 Thing, to *sin against the LORD*.

F I N I S.

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